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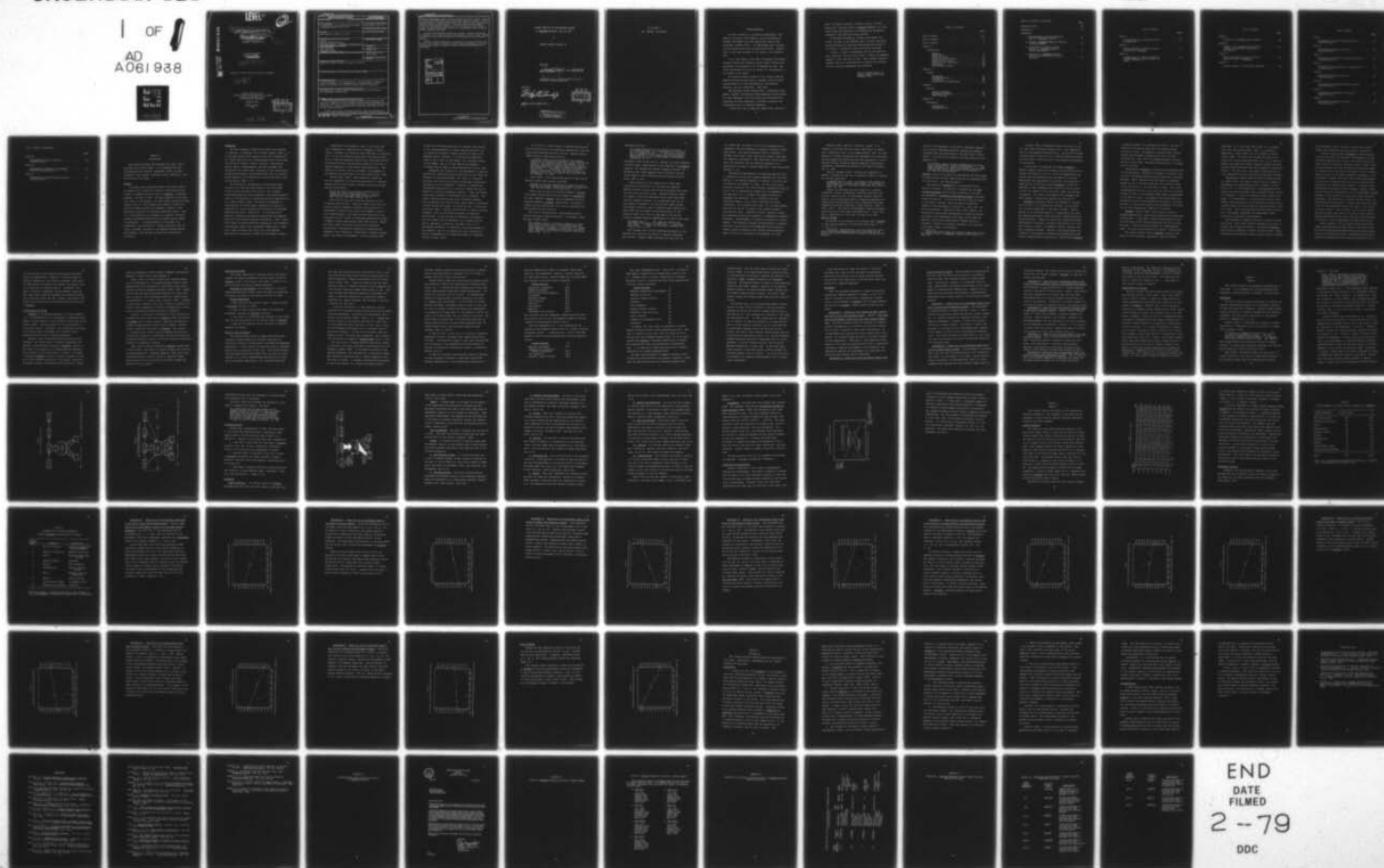
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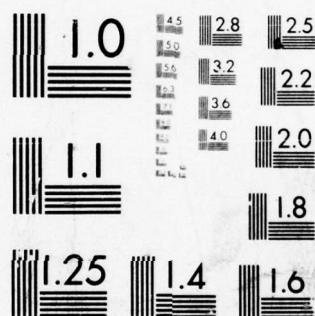
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CONTENT OF SOLDIERS MAGAZINE, 1971 to 1978 .

10 MAJOR SAMUEL E. WILSON, JR., USA  
HQDA, MILPERCEN (DAPC-OPP-E)  
200 Stovall Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22332

Vaughn

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


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trends in controversial issues, duty and training, and sports content. Medical, and research and development content trends were random and aperiodic. Policy, personal affairs, and personality content levels reflected their "departmentalization" during the period studied. A decreasing trend in miscellaneous content was statistically significant ( $p .05$ ). An increase in the average number of feature articles per issue with a corresponding decrease in average article length was also found.

An effort toward precision editing was concluded. Further concluded was the emergence of a strategy to provide human interest content of wider, individual appeal to support the recruitment and retention goals of the All-Volunteer Army. 

Additional research concerning the refinement of scattergram methods, the study of other magazine "stimulus" variables, and the development of a content classification scheme for comparative analysis among employee magazines is recommended.

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A TREND ANALYSIS OF THE FEATURE CONTENT  
OF SOLDIERS MAGAZINE, 1971 TO 1978

by

SAMUEL VAUGHAN WILSON, JR.

Approved

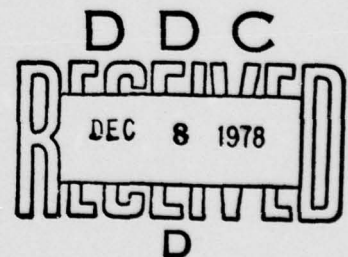
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To my family:

Ann, Vaughan, and Ashley



### Acknowledgements

To write a thesis is a collective undertaking. Professors, university staff members, fellow professionals, friends, and family--all have significant roles in any successful academic effort. To acknowledge fully my appreciation requires more than the space here allows. Nonetheless, to this most pleasant of all tasks, I now sincerely turn.

I will long remain in the debt of Professor Don Wright, my major advisor and counselor, whose liberal patience and confidence in me hopefully will be rewarded one day. Any future achievement of mine will reflect in large measure to his efforts in my behalf.

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Samuel Vaughan Wilson, Jr.  
Major, United States Army  
November 1978



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the topic, focus, and objectives of this study. It is organized into the following sections: purpose, background, object of study, statement of the problem, literature review, hypotheses, and limitations of the study.

#### Purpose

Utilizing content analysis methods, this study reports the results of an analysis of trends of the feature article content of randomly selected issues of Soldiers, an employee magazine, from 1971 to 1978. The basic purpose of this study is to show, in the absence of an established, written editorial formula, that it is both prudent and possible to derive an editorial formula through the systematic, objective, and quantitative analysis of previously published content. That is, a trend analysis can illuminate an "implicit" editorial formula, provided the publication is edited with any degree of consistency. A further purpose of this study is to demonstrate, once an editorial formula is derived, that the intent, strategy, and goals of the magazine editors become more apparent, and thus more available for scrutiny and evaluation.

### Background

The word "magazine" comes from an Arabic word meaning "an emporium, or warehouse full of goods" (McLean, 1969, p. 1). In the media sense we can substitute the term "information" for "goods" and arrive at a working description of the bound collections of stories, letters, accounts, illustrations, photos, charts, advertisements, and other messages that periodically are edited under the aegis of some over-arching communication purpose, and published under one of the nearly 20,000 magazine titles identified in the United States alone (Click & Baird, 1974, p. 7).

The evolution of the magazine in the United States, initially the forum and entertainment of the privileged, literate few in the early 19th century, into a highly diversified medium for mass consumption, has been documented widely in the histories of journalism and mass communications (e.g. Emery & Emery, 1978). The growth of magazines as organizational or institutional communication channels is evidenced in a recent International Association of Business Communicators survey, "Profile 75." It revealed that a majority of employee publications surveyed use the magazine format for their primary employee publication. Other, lesser used formats included newsletters, magapapers, and newspapers (International Association of Business Communicators, 1976). Dover (1959) estimates that 60% of the 6,500 employee publications in existence in 1959 used the magazine format.



Nonetheless, the systematic study of the status and use of magazines by organizations as channels to inform, educate, persuade, and entertain their employees is relatively new. A brief investigation reveals why: the main proliferation of employee magazines occurred only since World War II. The Second World War provided great impetus for the use of employee magazines to boost morale and productivity. This impetus was aided by official government encouragement to use magazines and periodicals for this purpose (Ford, 1969).

Bernard Smith (1961), noted industrial journalism scholar, emphasizes the functional practicality of relating company policies (particularly personnel policies) through employee publications.

People the world over are most interested in the things that affect them personally . . . it is important that any significant changes should be publicized in the house journals. (p. 7)

Other writers also have cited the potential utility of employee publications. McElreath (1970) states that the function usually assigned to employee publications is to disseminate information that would allow members to have a total understanding of the operation and objectives of the organization and to create or encourage appropriate attitudes of members toward organizational goals and policies. Biklen and Breth (1945) list several objectives for employee publications, including the integration of employees and management, the integration of departments, industry enlightenment, and product enlightenment. Click and Baird (1974)

present the following objectives for internal publications:

(a) to inform employees of company news and policies; (b) to explain and interpret company policies in terms of the employee and his interest; (c) to develop the employee's pride in his or her job and company; (d) to develop loyalty to the company; and (e) to help improve the company's efficiency and cut down on waste materials and time (p. 52).

Addressing the rationale for the development of employee publications, Bernard Smith also observes that the format and frequency of such publications lend itself to long-term planning, since editors can count on retaining a potentially continuous level of readership. Secondly, he argues that the employee publication is a selective medium and can be geared to a selective readership audience. Third, the medium establishes a personal relationship with its audience. And, fourth, employee publications can be economical mediums. Total production costs may be great, admits Smith, but bearing in mind circulation figures, he claims the cost is relatively low (Smith, 1961). Finally, Fred Wittener, a public relations counselor, cites the following principles for employee publications: (a) The publication should meet the needs of both the company and its employees; (b) It should provide useful, meaningful information, not small talk; (c) If distributed externally, it should go to the group leaders of the community; and (d) It requires the joint interest and effort of management and its appointed editor or counselor (Cutlip & Center, 1971).



In an effort to align content of employee publications with the objectives of the sponsoring organization, some companies have developed editorial policies. Rowena Ferguson (1958) defines an editorial policy as

[a charter] which sets the purpose of the magazine, determines its character and overall slant, defines the nature of the content by which the purpose is to be achieved, indicates the special mood or tone desired and establishes size, number of pages and frequency of publication. . . . When basic editorial policy is clearly articulated, it helps the editor to keep the magazine in line with its purpose and consistent with its messages. (p. 200)

Pikus (1977), in her unpublished master's thesis which analyzed company publications, concludes

Generally, it has been stated that an editorial policy contains the purpose, character and slant, the mood and tone, and the format of the publication. (p. 7)

Pikus cites the Granite City Steel Company's The Mill, the Northern Indiana Public Service Company's Nipscofolks, the Jewel Companies' Sharing, and the Washington National Insurance Company's Coverage, among others, as examples of company employee publications with clearly established and stated objectives and policies.

The value of having written, established editorial policies has been stressed frequently. For example, James McCloskey (1959) writes

The cardinal error is to publish a magazine or paper with no more tangible policy or objective than the vague hope that, in itself, a publication will somehow help establish an atmosphere of good cheer and solidarity, which will be reflected in greater loyalty and better work. (p. 4)

McCloskey also says

The company publication is not printed for profit, in an accounting sense. It is expected to pay its way not in traceable dollars . . . Yet only a relatively small population of all company publications makes a genuine effort to use the techniques of professional journalism. (p. 5)

McCloskey's view is born out by a finding in a study conducted by Harlan Logan, former editor of and consultant to Scribner's magazine, who examined the causes of magazine failure. He determined that those magazines that failed were the ones which lacked a clearly defined editorial pattern (Click & Baird, 1974, p. 50).

Other writers cite the competition of other media (particularly television) as a challenge for employee magazine editors to direct and focus each message with clear objectives and policies in mind. Theodore Peterson (1965), for example, lists three emerging factors about the modern, potential magazine audience: (a) As education goes up, so does magazine readership; (b) The educated reader becomes increasingly selective; and (c) Magazines must compete with other media for the reader's time and attention (p. 62). Charlton (1976) also cites the challenge of the new and different audience business communicators in America must reach

The median age is . . . 28. Half our people were born before the advent of television . . . the other half after . . . people [in the latter category] don't like to read. (p. 14)

What becomes clear from the preceding discussion is the apparent dual function that editors of employee magazines must perform. Kaufman (1966) describes this dual role as

(a) "advocating" the point of view of the organization he represents, and (b) responding to employee interests, needs, and desires. The employee magazine editor, according to Kaufman, works under a more "restrictive charter" than does his commercial counterpart. The former must justify continually his existence (and the resulting expense of the publication) in terms of meeting these twin, often conflicting demands (p. 11).

Meeting both requirements in an employee magazine often is referred to as editorial balance beginning with the major purpose of the employee magazine "to educate, to inform, and to entertain its readers" (p. 491). He also offers seven editorial objectives for a well-balanced, employee publication policy: (a) to harmonize the company and its management to the employees; (b) to integrate the common interests of management and employees; (c) to integrate staff and operating elements; (d) to extend individual and group recognition; (e) to educate and inform; (f) to bridge between home and job; and (g) to explain and interpret economic and political facts. According to Breth, education content and information content are essential to substantiate magazine investment. Entertainment is especially necessary to attract readers. The balanced attainment and maintenance of magazine objectives, writes Breth, are accomplished by the editorial formula, which he defines as the "pattern which determines [what] is written or pictured in the magazine" (p. 492).



Heusser (1954), similar to Charlton, thinks "it is probably a good idea for every house organ editor to assume that a substantial part of his audience doesn't read" (p. 423) because of boredom, fatigue, and the enamorment with television. She also agrees with Breth and notes the importance of a well-balanced formula to keep an employee magazine "interesting, informative, amusing and bolstering to the reader's personal ego" (p. 423).

Finally, Shuneman (1972), writing about magazines in general, stresses the need for an editorial formula to achieve two critical qualities.

A magazine gets its style, its purpose, and creates its environment by not being single pages, but by having a unity from cover to cover and a continuity from issue to issue. (p. 102)

Despite the rationale and the evidence for carefully considered, written, established, editorial objectives and policies, which in turn, are manifested through a specific formula, the overwhelming majority of employee magazines are being edited and published with little observance for these fundamental principles (McCloskey, 1959; Charlton, 1976; & Pikus, 1977). This prevailing phenomenon frames the primary justification for this study (discussed below). First, however, a description of the object of study is in order.

#### Object of Study

As printed in the heading of the contents page, Soldiers is "the official magazine of the United States Army."<sup>1</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup>Historical, administrative, and other editorial information concerning Soldiers magazine was furnished by the editors from office file material located at Cameron Station, Virginia.

serves as the Department of the Army's "employee" magazine in the overall management-employee communication program. Published under the supervision of the Army Chief of Public Affairs, its objectives (printed in the mast section of the magazine) are

[to provide] timely, factual information on policies, plans and operations, technical development, . . . and other information on topics of interest to Active Army, Army National Guard, Army Reserve and Department of the Army civilian employees.

Soldiers' monthly circulation is approximately 207,000 copies, of which 205,000 are bulk distributed and the remaining 2,000 are direct-mail, paid subscriptions.<sup>2</sup>

The history of Soldiers and its antecedents cover a period of 32 years. Its earliest forerunner was the Army Information Digest which evolved in 1946 out of the then War Department's Information and Education Digest, published during World War II. At that time and until 1954 the scope of the monthly, 64-page, book-size digest included all elements of the Department of Defense (i.e. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines). Beginning in July, 1954, however, the publication's mission was redesignated to become an information organ of the Department of the Army, and in 1955 its editorial offices were established at Cameron Station in Alexandria, Virginia (its present location), as an activity of the Army's Chief of Information.

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<sup>2</sup>These data were gained from personal communication with the Associate Editor of Soldiers, Captain Warren Lacey, 17 July 1978.



In August 1960, the magazine became an activity of the U.S. Army Troop Information Support Unit, later designated the U.S. Army Command Information Unit. This action confirmed the publication's function as an "internal" publication under the Army Chief of Public Affairs, who provides policy guidance to the editors.

In June 1971, the magazine was renamed Soldiers, a symbolic gesture along with substantial innovations in article content and editorial style "to close the communication gap between Army officialdom and men and women in the field." Recognizing that approximately 70 percent of the personnel is under age 25, the editors targeted Soldiers to reach the magazine's young readership more effectively with articles on such "gut issues" as race relations, drugs, ecology and consumerism. The style of the magazine was revamped, and a more energetic, personalized approach was striven for.

Soldiers is prepared, edited, and managed by a current office staff of four commissioned officers, five enlisted men, and seven Department of the Army civilians. Eighty percent of the published material is generated by the staff. The remaining 20 percent comes from Army information offices around the world. Ideas for a particular issue are developed approximately six months in advance of publication in a cycle that includes a series of screening, editing, clearing, and proof checking processes. Generally, the copy and production schedule for the magazine is based upon 55 working days from receipt of manuscripts to distribution. Publication of Soldiers

is approved formally by the Army Chief of Staff. The use of funds for printing and publication was authorized most currently in 1973. The magazine is printed under contract between the Government Printing Office and a civilian printing firm. This firm also packages and mails the major portion of each issue. The current printing cost of a single copy is 18 cents.

Distribution of Soldiers to the Army units and organizations is self-determined. Requests for numbers of copies are submitted to the Adjutant General Publications Center, Baltimore, Maryland. There, shipping lists and labels are prepared. Issues are put in the mail beginning with the 24th to 26th of the month prior to the cover date of issue. The current recommended distribution is one copy per every four officers, warrant officers, enlisted members, ROTC cadets, and Department of the Army civilians. The magazine also is distributed by subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, and direct mailing to 2,000 private agencies and individuals is allowed by the Joint Congressional Committee on Printing.

Soldiers' current format size is 8½ by 11 inches, a standard magazine size. Four-color process was first authorized in March 1963. In July 1967, authority was granted to print 12 cover wraps and 96 interior pages with four-color process each year. Interior pages are printed on coated magazine stock. The cover wrap is printed on a heavier, coated stock.

The current monthly issue of Soldiers consists of 60 pages with the following, approximate, page utilization

break-down: (a) a four-color wrap (6.6%); (b) a one-page flag, mast, and contents page (1.6%); (c) 12 pages of departmental content (20%); and (d) 43 pages of feature content (72%). The cover wrap includes the front cover, inside front cover, and outside back cover, all of which are usually full-page color bleeds, keying to feature articles inside, and the inside back cover, which displays a traditional "pin-up." The flag, mast, and contents page displays the title, administrative data, and listing of the issue's contents.

Departmental content is made up of the following sections:

(a) "What's New?", six pages of short briefs on changes or developments in organizational policy, consumer tips and advice, etc; (b) "The Lighter Side," a one-page humor section devoted to cartoons and jokes, usually organizationally related. (c) "Feedback," a letters to the editor section (usually two pages); (d) "Mindbinders," a one-page section which offers riddles, puzzles and identification questions which are related organizationally and have an implicit training function; and (e) "Focus," usually a two-page section which, with the liberal use of photograph, highlights the achievements and/or activities of individual Army personnel.

The remaining 43 pages are devoted to feature articles and stories. Each issue currently averages 12.3 articles or stories, and 3.5 pages per article. The editors of Soldiers use 10 topical categories to classify feature content. These categories are controversial issues, personal affairs, research



and development, policy, history, personalities, sports, hobbies and recreation, duty and training, and medical.

Along with a description of Soldiers it is also necessary to touch upon some of the important "environmental" factors which have impacted upon its style and content during the recent period of its latest renovation (1971 to 1978). These factors primarily have been variables of significant change. For example, the Active Army has decreased in size to approximately one-half of its former strength at the height of the Vietnam War. Further, the Active Army's mission has changed in priorities, from the prosecution of a war to the peacetime preparation for future possible conflict. Formerly relying upon the draft as the major source of manpower, the Army, during the early seventies, switched over to all "All-Volunteer" concept; manpower is now recruited as in any other large corporation. Accordingly, the Army faces a continual challenge to fill its ranks with qualified personnel. Further, once recruiting them, it must strive to persuade a significant number to opt for 20 or 30-year careers. Also, the Army's "total force" concept requires stronger, more routine ties with the Army National Guard and Army Reserve units, which now play a more vital role in the Army's overall preparedness and mobilization plans.

Social movements, such as minority opportunities and rights campaigns have had their impact on the Army as well. New policies implementing programs dealing with racial issues and the role of women have evolved. The emphasis on qualitative advances in technology to offset numerical inferiority vis a



vis other foreign, large standing armies has been a new thrust within the organization. Benefits, a central element in employee compensation, have become a perennial issue which the Army has had to grapple with, defend, and explain, both to its external and internal publics. Alcoholism, drug abuse, inflation, consumerism, the environment--these and many other issues which have emerged during the past decade--have framed and infused the past, present, and probably will govern the future matrix of content drawn upon by the editors of Soldiers.

#### Justification for Study

Soldiers, as an employee magazine of a large organization, is representative of a sub-category of magazines whose number has grown rapidly to an estimated 10,000 titles (Click & Baird, 1974). Content research in this sub-category is particularly sparse. Findings of this study would contribute to the anemic body of knowledge that currently exists regarding content trends of employee magazines.

Secondly, other than the previously quoted objective statement, the current use of 10 topical categories, and periodic, interim working directives, Soldiers, similar to the status of the majority of existing employee magazines, has no written, articulated policy or formula. To attempt to determine Soldiers' "implicit" editorial formula, as well as to offer further description of its editors' intentions, strategies, and goals, through the use of a scientific, content

analysis methodology, would be useful "feedback" regarding the magazine's current status (See Appendix A).

Third, there is a need for additional research towards the full development of a "stimulus-response" model of mass communication as an alternative to the reliance upon survey methods to predict readership (McCombs & Mauro, 1977). Readership surveys are being criticized frequently for their cost, lack of accuracy, and entanglements with new, complex legal considerations (i.e. privacy laws) (Janowitz, 1976). Findings of this study, focusing as such on a "stimulus" variable (i.e. content), when compared with relevant readership data, would yield a contribution towards this area of research.

Finally, it would be a contribution to the literature to determine the types and levels of feature content the editors of Soldiers use to inform, educate, entertain and sustain or reinforce organizational values of their readers. Feature content constitutes 72 percent of Soldiers' total content. It is reasoned that feature content possesses the exclusive and inherent potential to perform all identified functions of an employee magazine relative to the more topically restricted elements of a magazine's content.

What types of feature content has Soldiers focused upon? To what extent? What topics of feature content have received increasing emphasis? Decreasing emphasis? What topics have received relatively constant levels of emphasis? These questions give rise to and provide the thrust towards the objectives of this study.

### Objectives of Study

The evident importance of editorial policy and content formulae for employee magazines, and the current status of Soldiers, leads to the focus of this study in terms of the stated problem and related research questions.

Statement of the Problem. In the absence of a written, established editorial formula, what have been the intentions, strategies, and goals of the editors from 1971 to 1978?

### Research Questions.

1. What have been the topical trends in feature content of Soldiers from 1971 to 1978?
2. What do these trends reveal about the intentions, strategies, and goals of Soldiers' editors?
3. As a result of the methods and findings of this study, what are the implications for the further study of Soldiers?
4. What are the implications for the study of employee magazines in general?

### Review of the Literature

The earliest known study of company publications was conducted in March 1922 by the National Association of Corporation Training, the precursor of the American Management Association. It was a survey to study the scope of industrial publications in existence at that time. The study concluded that many publications had failed or were failing for three reasons: (a) a lack of understanding and direction of their use by the parent organization; (b) a false war-time boom



had over-sold the publications' practicality; and (c) company publications were having difficulty dealing with the varied questions of human relationships within the organization (Pikus, 1977). Pikus also reports that the International Council of Industrial Editors (ICIE) conducted its first survey concerning company publications in 1945. This study surveyed 460 industries primarily to determine the impact of post-war reconversion on publication budgets, opportunities, salary standards, and the entry of new publications into the field.

In 1951 an ICIE survey of 7,000 industrial editors revealed that 40 percent shared editing functions with public relations departments, 18 percent with advertising, and 11 percent with personnel (Walker, 1969, p. 13). Company publication format was analyzed by the ICIE in a 1957 study. It was estimated by this study that, at that time, a total of 9,000 company publications were in existence (both internal and external). Of this total 63 percent used the magazine format, 26 percent were newspapers, and 11 percent were newsletters or pamphlets (Business Week, 1957, p. 180).

The first study to analyze employee publication content is believed to have been conducted by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (1948). It analyzed the content of 399 employee magazines, and concluded that a significant change had occurred in post-World War II content compared to pre-World War II content. A stronger orientation was indicated in the latter period, e.g. keeping the employee better

informed, showing interest in his and his family's welfare, and in explaining where the employee fit in, in terms of company objectives, plans, and policies.

Another general study which specifically analyzed content was conducted in 1958 by the Association of National Advertisers, Inc. It polled 100 major companies as to what information workers wanted contained in their publications. The results (in priority) were as follows: (a) company background and organizational policies (especially new ones); (b) company plans and changes; (c) the effects of strikes, material shortages, and defense needs on jobs; (d) how jobs fit into the scheme of things and chances for advancement; (e) prospects for steady work; (f) the company's profits and losses, and future growth; and (g) reasons for lay-offs. The study further revealed that, of 300 surveyed employees, 90 percent wanted articles on specialized department news, 55 percent wanted sports, and 69 percent wanted cartoons (Summers, 1958, pp. 58-59).

In 1956 the ICIE, in the first of a series of "Operation Tapemeasure" studies, surveyed 6,800 company publications (R=1,600). The principal finding of this study revealed that only 38 percent of the respondents had written editorial policies or objectives (International Council of Industrial Editors, Note 1).

In 1969 the Industrial Press Research Center at Northern Illinois University conducted a study that surveyed 800 business communicators of the International Association of

Business Communicators (IABC) to determine, among other questions, the respondents' ranking of content categories for their publications. Results showed the following aggregate ranking of preferred content categories.

<u>Content Priority</u>	<u>%</u>
Operational information	66.5
Community problems	64.2
New facilities and expansion	53.7
Citizenship	36.8
Personnel changes	32.9
Race relations	31.8
Pollution	31.7
New Products	30.2
Benefits	27.4
Development and training	25.0

The conclusion was that respondent communicators were dealing primarily with "social and community issues of the day" (Industrial Press Research Center, Note 2).

Operation Tapemeasure No. 4, also conducted by the Industrial Press Research Center (Note 3), focused on employee magazine content. A questionnaire mailed to 3,000 IABC members in 1972 (R=1,230) produced the following ranking of content:

<u>Content Category</u>	<u>%</u>
Employee achievement	59.1
Expansion of facilities & product development	45.2
Job information	42.9
Business trends & outlook	42.4



The latest Tapemeasure study, "Profile 75," a survey of IABC members conducted by the Communication Center at the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University (Note 4), revealed the below listed employee publications content priorities:

<u>Content Category</u>	<u>%</u>
Employee recognition & achievement	13
Employee activities	12
Business trends & outlook	10
Personals	10
Job information	10
General interest stories	09
Expansion & new facilities	09
Labor relations	08
Comments on government action	08
Automation	08

In summary, the clear trend in preference is towards employee oriented content versus organizational news. However, it should be noted that, with the exception of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company study, all of the above studies were surveys of business communicators or readers who reported what their own preferences or observations were. It is important to keep this distinction in mind as revealed by the studies discussed below.

Not many content studies of company or employee publications have been reported in the general literature. Other than the 1948 Metropolitan Life Insurance Company study,

reported above, only two other content studies were found. Thralls (1967), in an unpublished master's thesis written at the University of Wisconsin, reported the results of an analysis of Army, a magazine primarily for management personnel. He examined content in terms of stated editorial objectives and reader interest. Results of his analysis showed a negative correlation between reader interest and the highest ranking content category. He further found several disparities between stated objectives and levels of content.

The second study, also an unpublished master's thesis, written by Pikus (1977) at Northern Illinois University, analyzed the status and trends of company publications in IABC District IV. Her findings with reference to 144 different publications were: (a) that format was not a determinant of content; (b) that 80.5 percent of the publications had no written editorial policies; and (c) that there was no relationship between content and editorial policy. Further, she found a wide disparity between stated publications objectives and actual content, e.g. the three highest ranking objectives reported by respondents were to inform employees, to outline company policies, and to provide employee recognition, in that order. On the other hand, actual analysis of the publications' content revealed the following highest levels of content: (a) social and economic problems; (b) corporate advertisements; and (c) operational information.

From the results of these two studies, it could be concluded that, even with the existence of established objectives and policies, only an actual content analysis can provide a true description of the editorial thrust and priorities of employee magazines.

### Hypotheses

Given the preceding discussion of theory and research bearing upon employee magazines in general, as well as a specific overview of the history, organization, current status, and environment of Soldiers, the following hypotheses relative to Soldiers' feature content trends are proposed.

Hypothesis 1. There will be a prevailing high trend in the level of duty and training content. Further, this level will be the highest, relative to all other content categories. The Army's primary reason for existence is predicated upon contingencies of war and/or civil/natural disaster. How the Army is prepared to meet these contingencies, the accomplishments and ongoing activities towards these contingencies, is a dominant theme and focus of interest throughout the organization. Additionally, this hypothesis finds support in the relatively high priority given to operational information, employee achievements, job information, and employee recognition and achievement--all categories with which duty and training topics interrelate.

Hypothesis 2. There will be an increasing trend in the



level of history content. This hypothesis is predicated on the facts that the Army's and the nation's bicentennial (1975 and 1976) were celebrated during the period under study. Additionally, history is a traditional topic of study, entertainment, and morale reinforcement in the Army's scheme of organizational communication. Support also is drawn from the relatively high ranking of organizational background content found in some of the previously discussed research.

Hypothesis 3. There will be an increasing trend in the level of hobbies and recreation content. This hypothesis is advanced because of several factors. First, it inter-relates with previously shown high priority content categories, e.g. employee recognition, employee activities, and employee achievement. Secondly, it deals with off-duty activities of human interest. And third, it offers reinforcement to the high priority Army message that organizational members can and do lead interesting and rewarding lives. This latter rationale is significant in view of the fact that the Army must now recruit and maintain employees on a voluntary basis.

Hypothesis 4. There will be a decreasing trend in the level of controversial content. This hypothesis is advanced due to the fact that the controversies of the Vietnam War, drug abuse, the environment, civil rights, racial conflict, women's liberation, the Volunteer Army, and so on, were prominent and surfaced with their greatest impact early in

the period studied. The recent cycle of social and political controversy has largely subsided. Soldiers, is expected to reflect this decline.

Hypothesis 5. There will be a decreasing trend in the level of policy, personal affairs, and personalities content. This hypothesis is not advanced due to a lowered emphasis placed by the editors on these topics. Rather, these topics have been emphasized to the extent that they have been departmentalized into various standard and recurring sections of the magazine. Nonetheless, this policy change will have the net effect of lowering levels in the feature content.

Hypothesis 6. There will be a relatively constant trend in the level of medical content. Medical content embraces topics of a relatively secondary, aperiodic emphasis and interest. Medical benefits and treatment, problems, and employee/dependent care and eligibility are items of concern to both management and employees. However, it is a relatively narrow topic that does not command the amount of recurring coverage that other, more primary topics, do.

Hypothesis 7. There will be a rising trend in the level of sports content. This is predicted partly due to the Army's increasing emphasis on physical fitness and well-being. More importantly, it serves an entertainment function, particularly with the young, enlisted soldier, similar to the function of hobbies and recreation topics.

Hypothesis 8. There will be an increasing trend in the level of research and development content. This is advanced due to an increased emphasis on technology and modern combat/combat support systems for the current and future,

smaller standing Army. The employees' understanding and adjustment of new techniques, material, and weaponry are of growing concern to Army management, similar to automation topics in the civilian sector. The relatively low level is predicted because of the low reader appeal of this content category in general.

#### Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations which affect the internal and external validity of this study. First, this study's focus on feature content (a subset of total content) excludes comprehensive conclusions about trends of the total content of Soldiers. Secondly, due to time limitations, reliability of feature content coding was not tested. Hence, content coding will reflect the inherent bias of one individual's judgment. Third, the use of "scattergram" analysis (the specific methodology of this study) arbitrarily will delineate trends irrespective of aperiodic fluctuations in levels of content, i.e. a linear relationship of category to the overall time period (1971 to 1978) will be "forced." Thus findings of this study cannot be collapsed into a sub-time frame such as one year. Finally, this study's compatibility with other employee publication studies will be inhibited partially by the use of content category topics generic to the Army's unique organizational concerns and terminology. Comparisons of the results of this study's findings with other research will necessitate careful translation, i.e. this study is primarily pragmatic in nature.



## Chapter 2

### Method

This chapter presents and discusses the methodology of this study. It is organized into the following sections: background, conceptualization, procedures, and limitations.

#### Background

The use of content analysis methodology to identify and examine communication messages is an established technique of wide and traditional acceptance. Berelson (1952) defines content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (p. 18).

Stewart (1943), in discussing the validity of content analysis as an inferential tool in the analysis of communication channels, writes

The channels of communication are finite. There is only a limited amount of space.... In the selection of symbols (and messages) to be communicated some conscious choice is made. (pp. 286-287)

Even though Stewart was focusing on the use of "channel devices," his observation accurately pinpoints the time and space dynamics of content selection as well.

Budd, Thorpe, and Donohew (1967) cite the utility of content analysis to "tap into the communication process," to gain primary insight about the communication situation

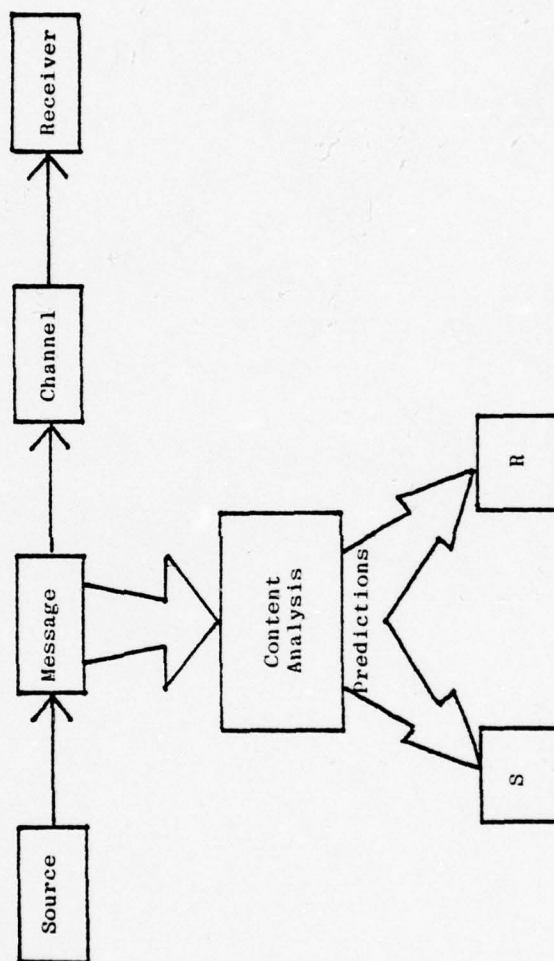
(Figure 1). They add

Until recently, most users of this method appear to have concentrated only on the study of manifest content, leaving unanswered the larger question of its relationship to other variables. Yet, an understanding of these relationships is a necessary prerequisite to understanding communication behavior. (p. 3)

According to Budd, et al., if the researcher gains additional information about the source (e.g. gatekeeping studies), the channel (e.g. media analysis), the receiver (e.g. audience analysis), or from feedback (e.g. through monitoring), he is then in a position to better predict about the source, the receiver, and their relationship (Figure 2). Content analysis, then, is a tool that can be used in conjunction with other techniques.

Janowitz (1976) concurs with Budd, et al., and specifically points to the value of content analysis in (a) the determination of message trends, and (b) the intent, strategy, and goals of the communicator. He writes: "Whenever symbolic behavior is being scrutinized, analysis of content is involved" (p. 17). Janowitz, similar to McCombs (1977), predicts the emergency of content analysis as the pivotal tool in the development of a stimulus-response readership prediction model, citing the particular utility of content analysis in the analysis of long-term trends. According to Janowitz, trend studies are being re-examined as a means of weighing the cumulative impact of mass media. Furthermore, he points out that content analysis is cheaper, easier to apply, and avoids entanglement with the recently

Figure 1  
A Model of the Communication Process

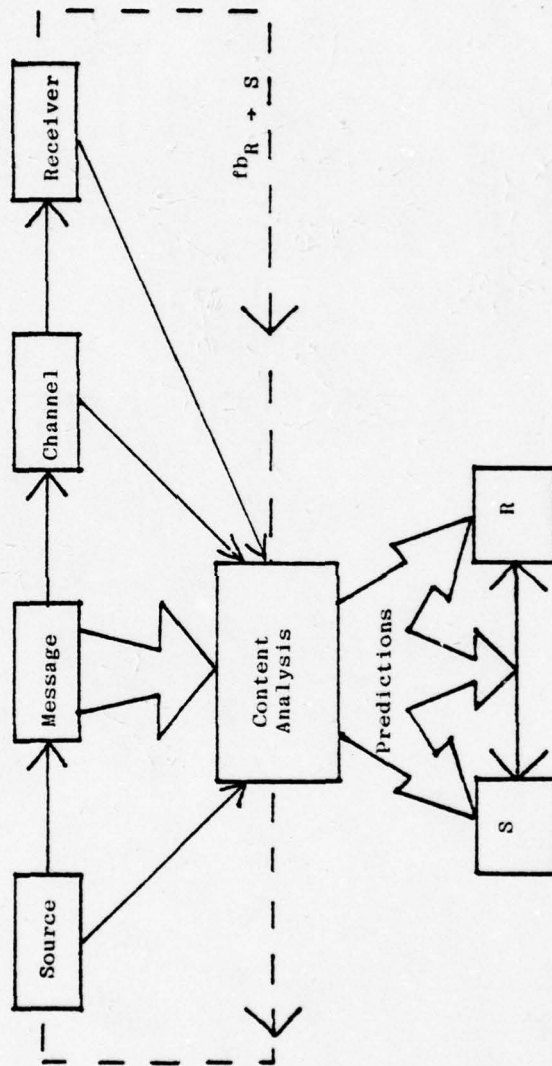


Code: S, source, R, receiver

(Source: Budd, Thorpe & Donohew, 1967, page 3)



Figure 2  
A Model of the Communication Process  
(analyst provided with additional information)



Code: S, source; R, receiver

(Source: Budd, Thorpe & Donohew, 1967, page 4)

established privacy laws--all drawbacks to the more widely used readership survey techniques.

Stevenson (1973) also stresses the importance of the study of communication content. He states

the reading decision is based largely on the apparent content of the article--what the reader thinks the article is about.... Illustrations and layout may attract the potential reader to the article, but the decision to read or skip the article is based less on these factors than on what the article seems to be about. (p. 65)

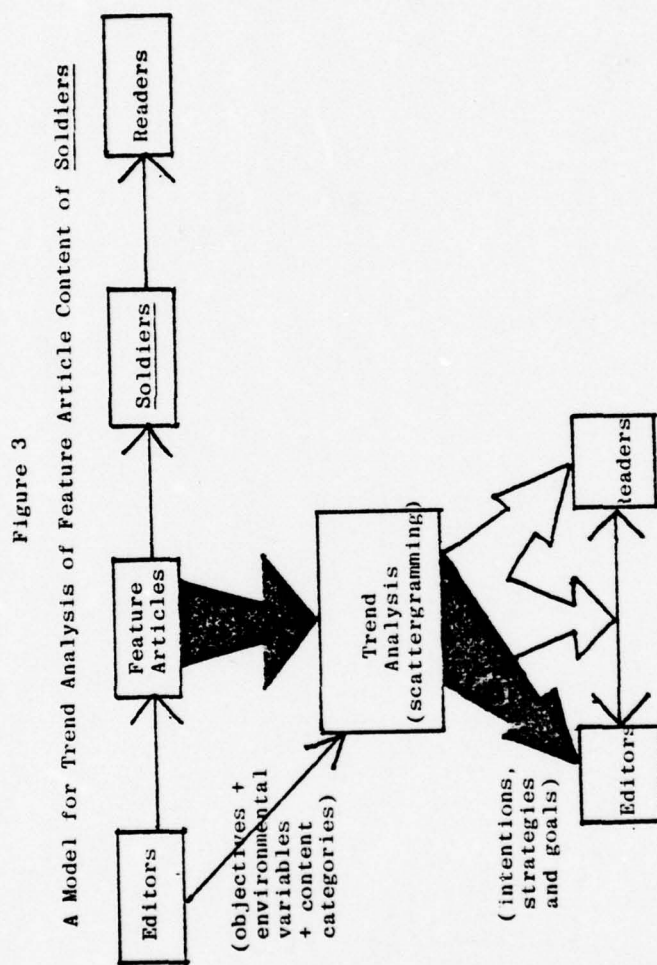
### Conceptualization

Taking these considerations to mind, the main thesis of this study was formulated using an operational model based primarily upon the previous work of Budd, et al. (Figure 3). Implicit in this model were three assumptions:

1. From 1971 to 1978 spans the time-frame of Soldiers' editorial life, and, as such, represents a sufficient interval for the quantitative measurement of trends;
2. Feature content (72 percent of the total content of Soldiers) represents the single variable of widest, potential, editorial choice and emphasis, warranting exclusive study; and
3. This model, utilizing traditional statistical methods, would be, to quote Berelson again, "systematic, objective, and quantitative." (1952, p. 18).

### Procedures

Span of Analysis. All feature content of Soldiers published from June 1971 (the first issue) to May 1978 (the





84th issue, or seven years) constituted the theoretical scope of this study.

Sample. A random sample of 42 issues (or 50 percent of the population) was selected for analysis with the deliberate provision that each of the seven years would be represented equally (i.e. six issues for each year). This admittedly large sample (see Appendix B) was justified due to the desire to generate sufficient content unit observations to establish a solid basis for the scatterplotting of annual content levels.

Unit of Analysis. The unit of analysis was the article or story. This unit was selected as being the most rapid and efficient to use (Geller & Lasswell, 1942).

Coding. All feature articles or stories listed under the heading "feature" on the contents page of each selected issue were analyzed individually and coded into one of the following categories.

1. Controversial issues. If the article dealt with a topic of apparent debate, either internal or external to the Army, it was so coded (e.g. the role of women in combat units, the status of prisoners of war, race relations, the environment, and so on).

2. Personal Affairs. This topic covered articles concerning the personal welfare of the individual employee and/or his dependents (e.g. home buying, personal finances, consumer tips, legal affairs, and so on).

3. Research and Development. Articles in this category dealt with the Army's efforts and achievements in the area of technological, material, and human research (e.g. new weapons systems, new items of personal equipment, automation, and so on).

4. Policy. This topic covered all articles that reported organizational news, rules and regulations regarding internal operations and administration, and official views regarding the Army's relationship with society (e.g. promotion criteria, pay and allowances, administrative procedures, schooling, overseas travel, relations with the press, and so on).

5. History. All articles or stories that dealt with past events, incidents, or personalities in the organizational life were coded under this heading (e.g. World War II units, Civil War battles, past members of famed achievement, and so on).

6. Personalities. Any article focusing on or featuring a specific, living employee of the Army by name and describing some distinguishing or interesting status or achievement was coded under this topic (e.g. the Army's best marksman, tallest employee, oldest paratrooper, and so on).

7. Sports. This topic represents all feature articles dealing with organized recreational, athletic or spectator events normally classified under the classification "sport" (e.g. the Indianapolis 500, NFL football preview, boxing,

sports cary rallying, sport parachuting, track and field, and so on).

8. Hobbies and Recreation. All articles that focused on off-duty activities of a non-regulated or non-organized nature (contrary to the nature of sport) were grouped under this heading (e.g. sight-seeing, stamp collecting, painting, theater, carnival going, backpacking, and so on).

9. Duty and Training. This broad content topic was used to identify all articles dealing with the nature, description, and status of official activity within the Army, particularly that of units, agencies, installations, and other collective elements (e.g. field training exercises, life and duty at Fort Carson, Colorado, the Military Police Corps, civil affairs activities, ranger schooling, and so on).

10. Medical. All articles dealing with medical treatment, prevention, hygiene, nutrition, benefits, and privileges, and so on, were classified under this heading.

11. Miscellaneous. This category was added to classify all articles and stories which clearly could not be coded into one of the above categories, either because it fell totally outside the established criteria, or that at least 50 percent of the total content of the article could not be identified as generic to any one category.

Each of 612 articles was coded by a three-digit number (001-612), a two-digit issue number (1-12), a one-digit year



number (1-7), and a two-digit content number (1-11) (see Appendix C).

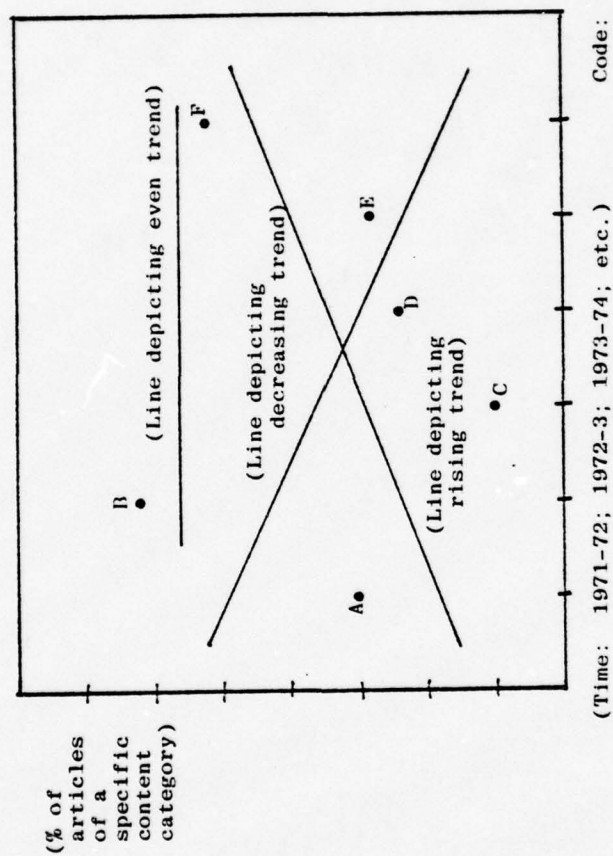
Programming. The above data were punched onto computer cards. Two programs, utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences manual (1975) were developed to run, tabulate, and plot the data. The first program called for a cross-tabulation of content category by each of seven time periods (1971-72; 1972-73; 1973-74 ... 1977-78). The cross tabulation table was constructed to display count, row percentage, column percentage, and total percentage. The second program called for 11 scattergrams which displayed plot points of column percentages for each content category by year (see Appendix D). Intercept and slope data, sufficient to compute and display the mathematical trend from the first to the last year under observation, also were requested. Figure 4 depicts a graphic display of a scattergram.

The resulting data from the two programs were reviewed and analyzed. Findings are reported in Chapter 3.

#### Limitations of Methodology

Several limitations to this study's methodological approach are acknowledged. The number of degrees of freedom (df) involved in the cross tabulation analysis (in this case 60 df) would tend to render standard probability test results close to meaningless. Secondly, since only seven time observations were made (one for each year in the study), the

Figure 4  
Graphic Display of Scattergram Analysis



Code: A, B, C, etc., are  
yearly percentages of articles  
within a specific content  
category.

level of correlation and probability would be extremely vulnerable to wide ranging fluctuations in annual levels of specific content. In other words, a reasonable degree of editorial consistency (and coder reliability) is necessary for Pearson's product-moment coefficient of correlation, and standard probability tests to show or approach statistical significance. For the purposes of evaluating the findings of this study, then, the following statistical criteria applied: (a) statistically significant results =  $p < .05$ ; (b) statistically meaningful results =  $p < .06$  to  $p < .50$ . Naturally, the higher the probability of chance, the less meaningful the result.



## Chapter 3

### Results

This chapter reports the results of the analysis described in Chapter 2. The findings of this study will be presented in three sections--general findings, hypotheses findings, and other findings.

#### General Findings

The results of the cross-tabulation analysis of the 612-article sample (Table 1) show that the level of feature content ranged from a high of 125 articles (20.4%) in 1971-72, down to a low of 58 articles (9.5% in 1973-74, and back up to a current level of 83 articles (13.6%) from 1975 onward. This finding reflects the format reduction in total pages per issue from 72 (through June 1971) to 64 (through June 1972) to the current 60-page format, effective with the July 1972 issue. The average article count per issue in 1973-74 was 9.7, compared to the overall average of 14.6 from 1971 to 1978, and the current average of 12.3 in 1977-78. The average article length in 1973-74 was 4.8 pages, compared to a current average length of 3.5. Apparently the editors of Soldiers were opting for fewer but longer feature articles during the 1973-74 period.

Reviewing the column totals for each content category,



an overall rank ordering of content by topic can be determined (Table 2). While this table does not reflect specific trends, it does provide a seven-year "snapshot" of content priorities, i.e. a "general" formula.

A relative comparison of content category ranking between Soldiers and the results of the Profile 75 study (reported in Chapter 1) is presented at Table 3. A detailed analysis of the comparative rankings is inhibited due to oblique and overlapping terminology, but some similarities and disparities in priority are indicated. For example, duty and training content partially interrelates with employee recognition and achievement, although the former category focuses more on collective recognition and achievement. Hobbies and recreation content also interrelates to some degree with employee activities, particularly leisure-time or off-duty activities. An even closer similarity is found in the parallel ranking of controversial issues and government action, and research and development and automation content, respectively. Note that there are no equivalent categories for history, sports, and personal affairs content in the Profile 75 study.

#### Hypotheses Findings

Turning to the trend analysis findings of this study, and applying the evaluation criteria set forth in Chapter 2, the results of the eight hypotheses tests are discussed individually below.



Table 2  
Overall Ranking of Feature Content Categories of Soldiers

Content Category	Article Count	%
Duty and training	138	22.5
Hobbies and recreation	74	12.1
Policy	66	10.8
Miscellaneous	65	10.6
Personal affairs	50	8.2
History	47	7.7
Personalities	43	6.9
Medical	38	6.2
Controversial issues	34	6.2
Research and development	15	2.5
Total	612	100.1*

\*The .1 of a percentage point above 100 reflects the rounding off of percentages to one decimal point.

Table 3  
A Comparison of Content Categories  
Between Soldiers and the Profile 75 study<sup>a</sup>

Category Rank	Soldiers	Profile 75
1	Duty and training	Employee recognition and achievement
2	Hobbies & recreation	Employee activities
3	Policy	Business trends and outlook
4	Personal affairs	Personals
5	History	Job information
6	Personalities	General interest stories
7	Sports	Expansion and new facilities
8	Medical	Labor relations
9	Controversial issues	Government action
10	Research & development	Automation

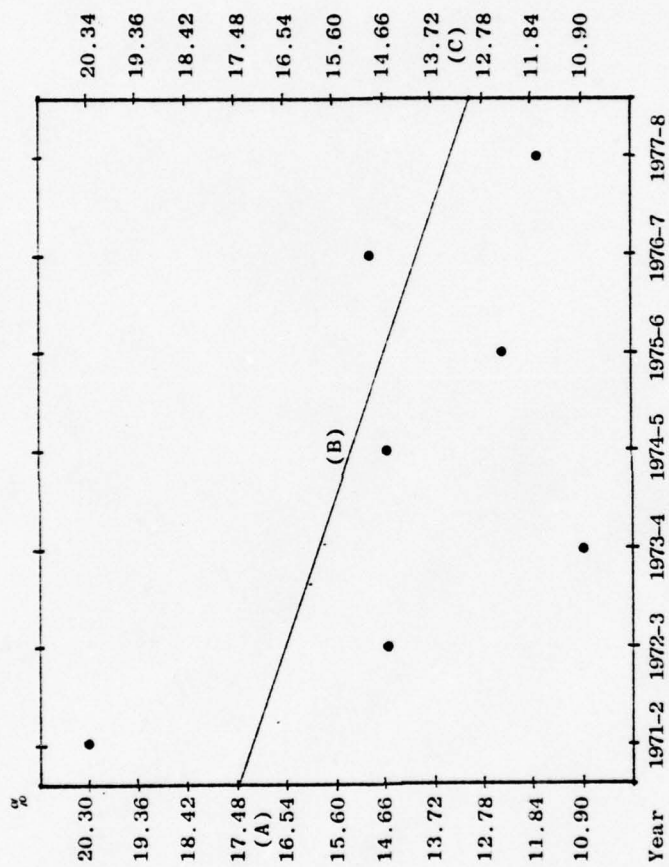
<sup>a</sup>For the purposes of comparison between an equal number of categories, Soldiers' miscellaneous content was not considered.

Hypothesis 1. There will be a prevailing, high trend in the level of duty and training content. Further, this level will be the highest, relative to all other content categories. The first part of this hypothesis was not confirmed (Chart 1). In fact, data ran contrary to the hypothesis; there was a meaningful indication of a decreasing trend in this content category ( $\underline{r} = -.53$ ,  $p < .12$ ).

On the other hand, duty and training content ranked consistently higher than all other content categories in relative percentage for each of the seven years observed. Approximately one out of every five articles for the entire period fell within this category, or 22.5% of total content. Thus, while a downward trend is indicated, duty and training content remains a primary topical concern of the editors. Its current relative percentage (19.3%) places duty and training content well above the mean level of 9.1% (100 divided by 11 topic categories = 9.1).



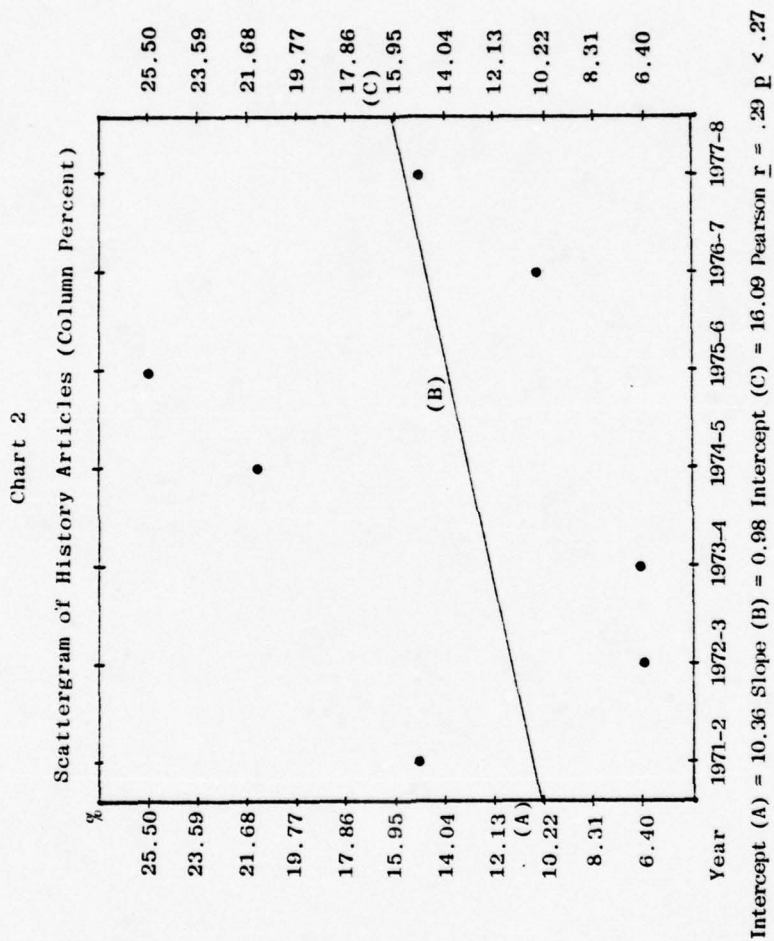
Chart 1  
Scattergram of Duty & Training Articles (Column Percent)



Intercept (A) = 17.41 Slope (B) = -0.78 Intercept (C) = 12.98 Pearson  $r = -.53$   $p < .12$

Hypothesis 2. There will be an increasing trend in the level of history content. While this hypothesis was not confirmed, there was some support for it ( $r = .29$ ,  $p < .27$ ). An analysis of Chart 2 shows that the upward trend was artificially influenced by the high levels of content published in 1974-75 (21.3%) and 1975-76 (25.5%), as was predicted. The bicentennial anniversaries of the Army (1975) and the nation (1976) received strong emphasis by Soldiers' editors.

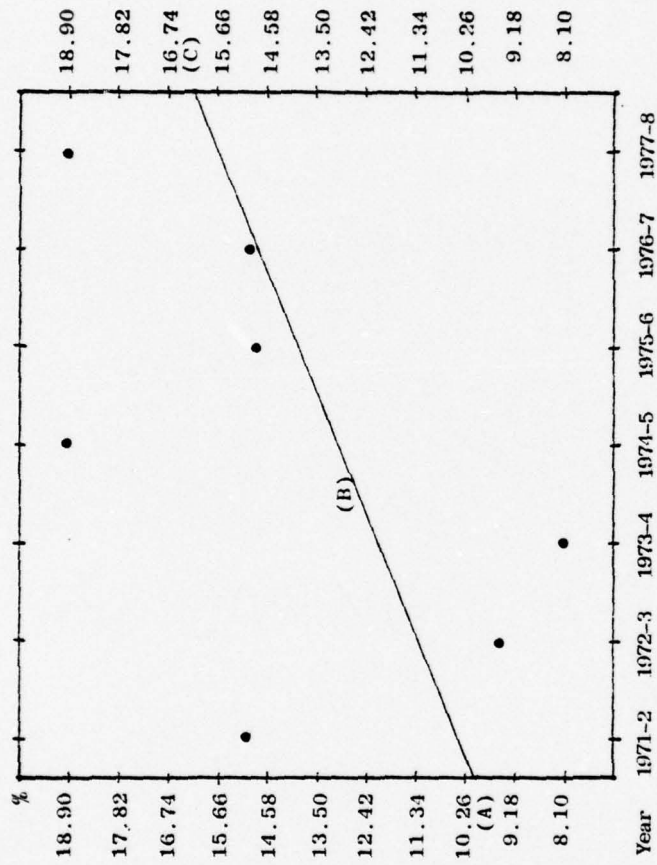
History articles ranked fifth overall (7.7%), but during the two above cited years it ranked third (11.4%), behind duty and training, and hobbies and recreation content, and second (14.5%), behind duty and training content, respectively. Discounting the arbitrary impact of content levels during these two years, it appears that the trend in history would otherwise be stable and relatively even.





Hypothesis 3. There will be an increasing trend in the level of hobbies and recreation content. This hypothesis was not confirmed (Chart 3), but strong support for it was found ( $r = .55$ ,  $p < .11$ ). Hobbies and recreation content levels declined during 1972-73 and 1973-74, the period when organizational change and socioeconomic issues were a predominating concern. Beginning with the 1974-75 period, however, hobbies and recreation content levels indicate a rising emphasis. This specifically employee-oriented topic ranked second in overall total content (12.1%), and its current relative percentage (16.9%) indicates a continuing, strong priority.

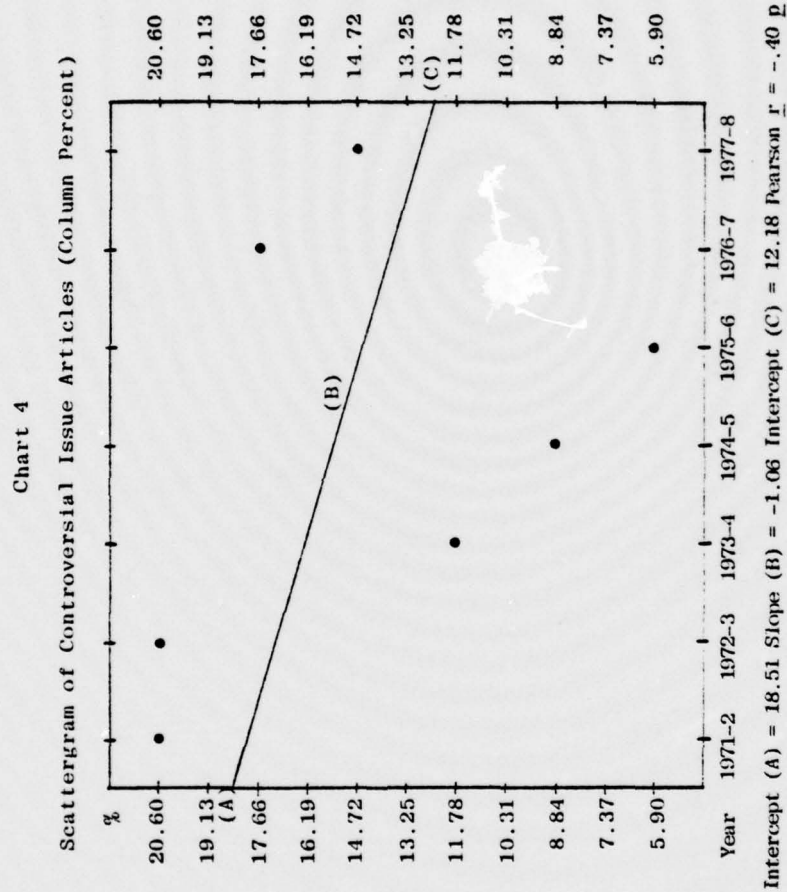
Chart 3  
Scattergram of Hobbies & Recreation Articles (Column Percent)



Hypothesis 4. There will be a decreasing trend in the level of controversial issue content. This hypothesis was not confirmed (Chart 4), but there was indication of support ( $r = -.40$ ,  $p < .19$ ). Controversial issue content levels were at a peak (20.6%) during the early seventies (1971-72 and 1972-73), reflecting the sociopolitical and organizational turbulence of that period. Subsequent to that time, the decrease in controversial issue content levels reflects an increasing overall stability within the organization (e.g. the end of the Vietnam War), as well as the rising conservative outlook in society at large.

The moderate increase in controversial issue content over the last two years of the study seems to represent an upward adjustment in emphasis to deal with on-going issues such as energy, benefits changes, and the future of the volunteer Army concept. This analysis is further supported by a Syracuse University study reported by Stessin in the New York Times (1977), which reports an upward trend in controversial issue content in company publications as an effort to achieve and maintain editorial legitimacy with readers.



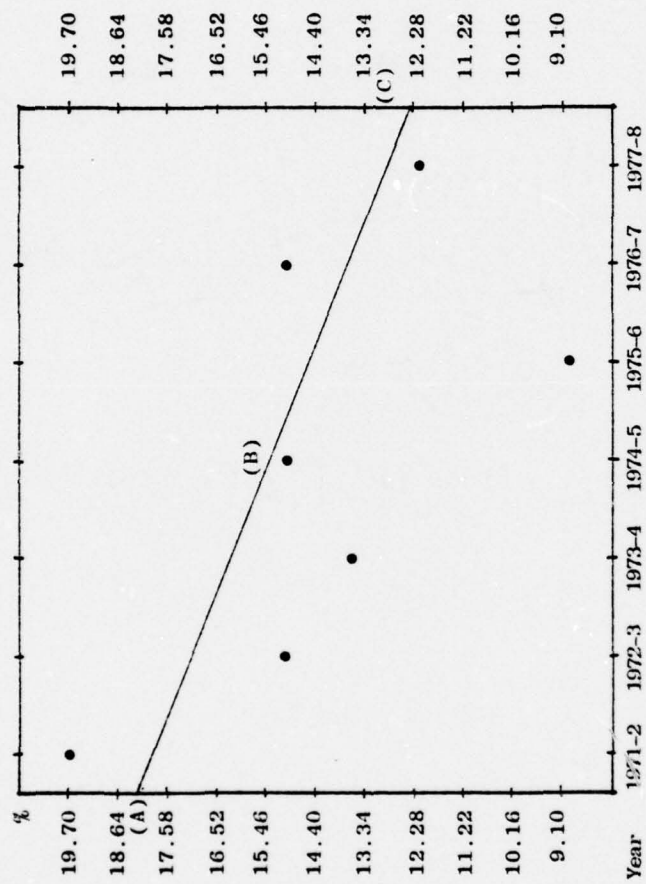


Hypothesis 5. There will be a decreasing trend in the level of policy, personal affairs, and personality content.

This hypothesis was advanced primarily due to the gradual expansion of the departmental section of Soldiers from seven pages in 1971-72 to 12 pages in 1977-78. This hypothesis was not confirmed (Charts 5, 6, & 7), but support was indicated: policy ( $\underline{r} = -.65$ ,  $p < .06$ ); personal affairs ( $\underline{r} = -.26$ ,  $p < .29$ ); and personality content ( $\underline{r} = -.38$ ,  $p < .20$ ).

As stated in Chapter 1, these three topics are now regularly covered in the departmental sections of Soldiers. This change in editorial policy seems to have had the greatest impact on policy content trends, followed by personalities, with less impact on personal affairs content trends. Nonetheless, their overall rankings of third (policy), fourth (personal affairs), and sixth (personalities) in total feature content levels indicates a continuing, broad editorial emphasis transcending departmental and feature content distinctions. As shown in previous research, these topics are traditional bread and butter topics of an employee magazine. Soldiers' continuing emphasis on these topics reflects this tradition.

Chart 5  
Scattergram of Policy Articles (Column Percent)



Intercept (A) = 18.20 Slope (B) = -0.98 Intercept (C) = 12.36 Pearson  $r = -.65$   $p < .06$



Chart 6  
Scattergram of Personal Affairs Articles (Column Percent)

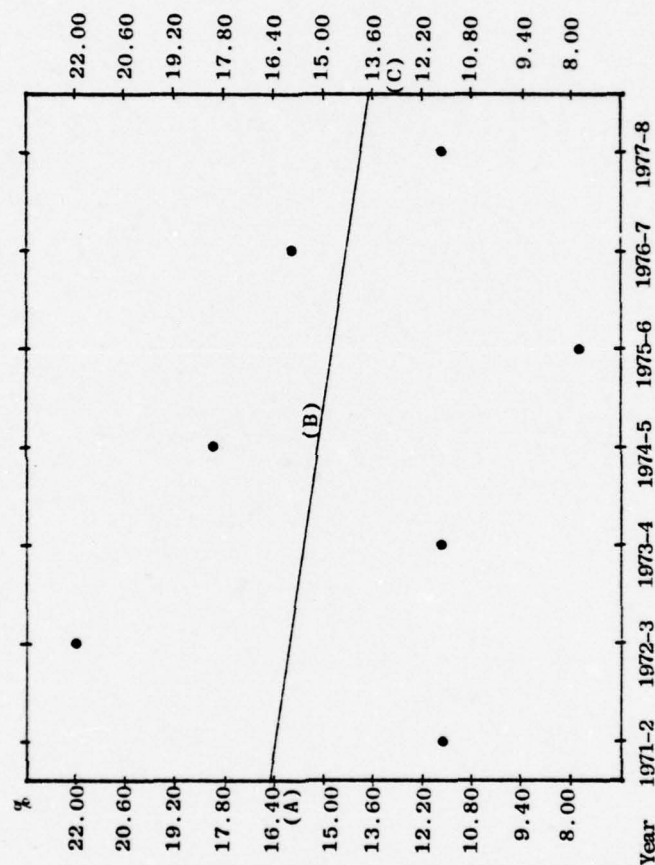
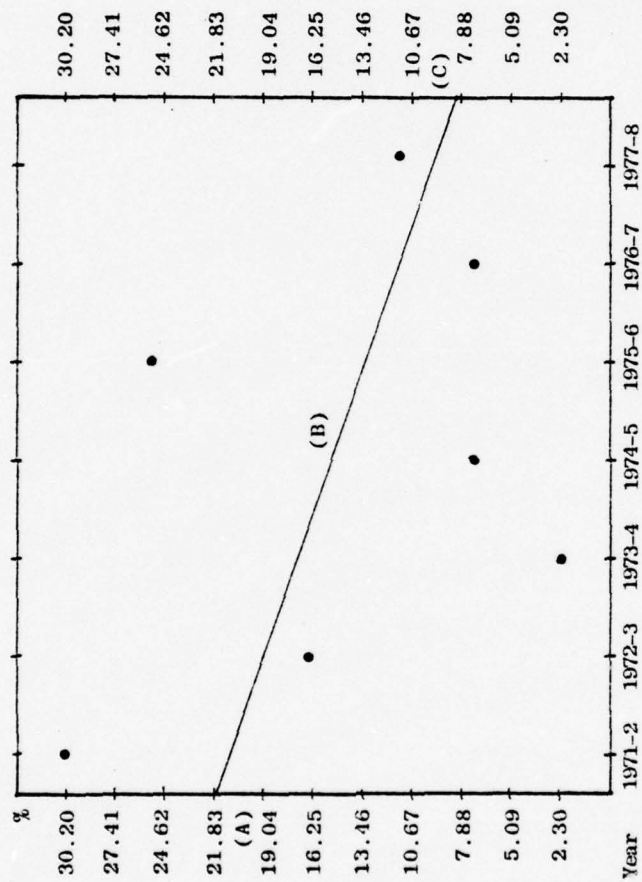


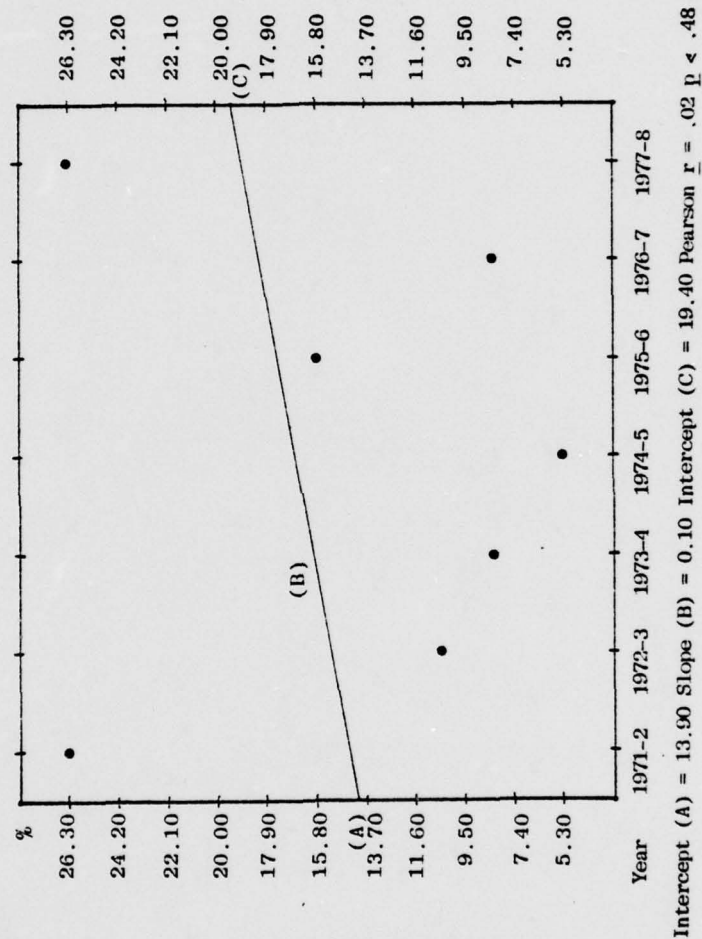
Chart 7  
Scattergram of Personality Articles (Column Percent)



Hypothesis 6. There will be a relatively constant trend in the level of medical content. This is not a variance hypothesis: it predicts a static relationship over time. (Chart 8). In fact, no conclusive trend could be determined ( $r = .02$ ,  $p < .48$ ). It appears that content levels in this secondary topic are aperiodic and fluctuate according to the timeliness of a given subject. Medical content is more specialized by nature than the other topical categories, and its random emphasis appears to be a continuing practice of Soldiers' editors.

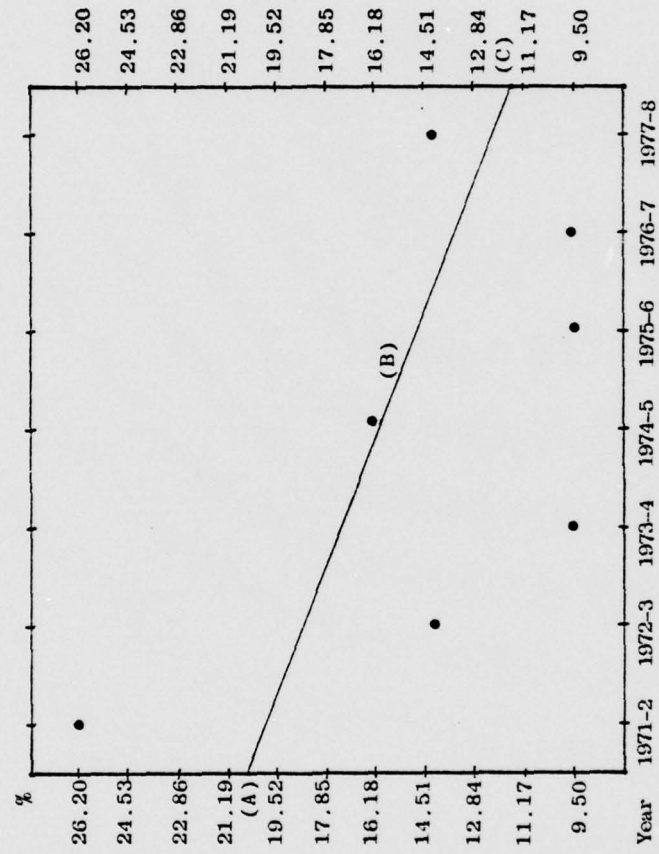


Chart 8  
Scattergram of Medical Articles (Column Percent)



Hypothesis 7. There will be a rising trend in the level of sports content. The trend line ran contrary to this hypothesis (Chart 9). Conversely, strong support was shown for an opposite trend ( $r = -.58$ ,  $p < .09$ ). Sports content, a topic of traditional entertainment value, began a sharp decline in 1972-73. The initial drop is attributed to the corresponding emphasis placed upon policy, controversial issues, and personal affairs topics. However, it appears that the continuing reduced level in sports content is due to an inverse increase in hobbies and recreation content, a more personalized topic category with wider reader appeal, particularly among the increasing number of women employees, and among dependents. The strength of this finding is surprising in view of the Army's traditional view of sports as an effective entertainment subject with high readership appeal.

Chart 9  
Scattergram of Sports Articles (Column Percent)

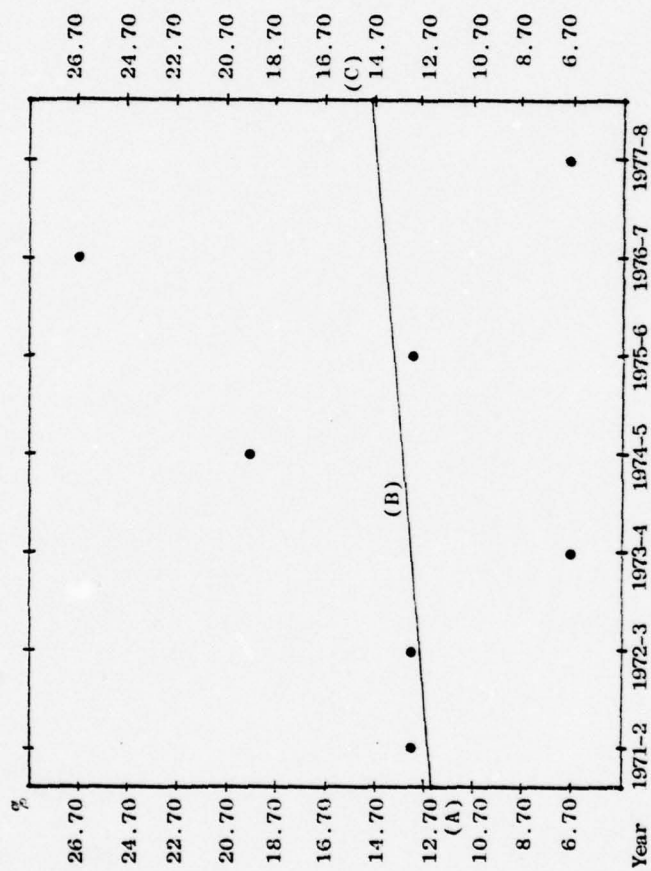


Intercept (A) = 20.75 Slope (B) = -1.62 Intercept (C) = 11.53 Pearson  $r = -0.58$   $p < .09$



Hypothesis 8. There will be an increasing trend in the level of research and development content. This hypothesis was not confirmed (Chart 10), further, it appears that there is also little support for it ( $r = .15$ ,  $p < .38$ ). Similar to medical content, research and development content appears to be randomly emphasized. The proliferation of technical journals throughout the Army seems to have had a negative impact on the levels of content in the Army's general employee magazine. The low, random priority assigned to this topic is paralleled in employee magazines in general.

Chart 10  
Scattergram of Research & Development Articles (Column Percent)



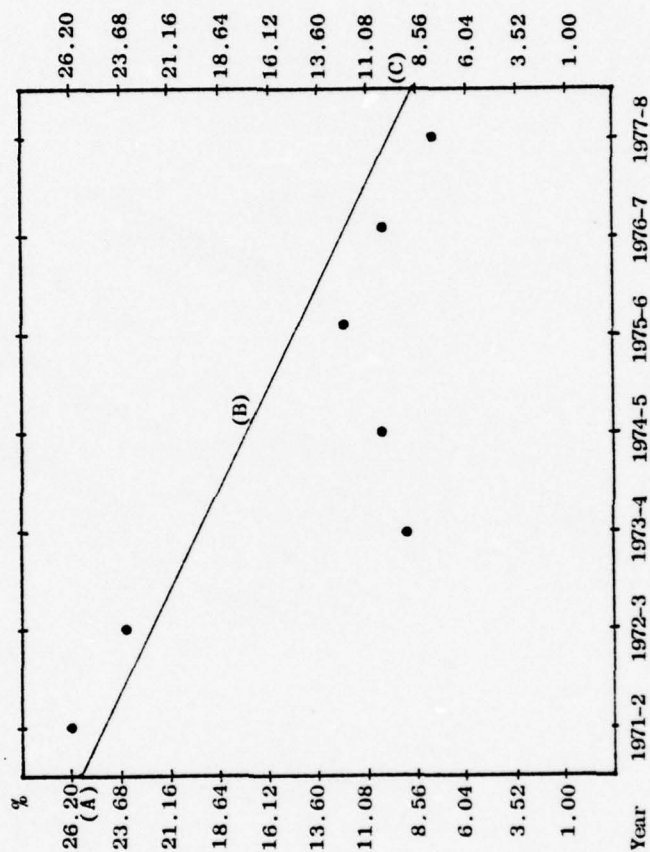
Intercept (A) = 12.34 Slope (B) = 0.49 Intercept (C) = 14.84 Pearson  $r = .15$   $p < .38$

### Other Findings

Perhaps the most important finding of this study was one that was not hypothesized, but was, in fact, the most statistically significant. A dramatic, decreasing trend ( $r = -.88$ ,  $p < .02$ ) in miscellaneous content was indicated (Chart 11).

This finding clearly indicates an effort by the editors of Soldiers to edit more deliberately within the parameters of the 10 established content categories. This, in turn, could be interpreted as a general trend toward the concept of "precision editing" (Click & Baird, 1974). This finding will be discussed further in Chapter 4 (Discussion).

Chart 11  
Scattergram of Miscellaneous Articles (Column Percent)



Intercept (A) = 25.30 Slope (B) = -2.75 Intercept (C) = -5.84 Pearson  $r = -.88$   $p < .02$



## Chapter 4

### Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the conclusions of this study. Additionally, recommendations for further research are indicated.

#### Conclusions

1. Despite the fact that Soldiers is not governed by a written, established editorial policy, the results of this study indicate the operation of a general, implicit formula, particularly during the latter half of the period studied. The statistically significant, decreasing trend in miscellaneous content ( $r = -.88$ ,  $p < .02$ ) indicates a positive effort to focus the feature article content of Soldiers within the 10 established content categories which constituted the dependent variables of this study. This trend demonstrates a primary principle that Click and Baird (1974) and other writers have termed "precision editing." Precision editing is an editing technique which attempts to formulize and formalize types and levels of readership in the target audience. This technique is predicated upon the functioning of a "stimulus-response" model of mass communication, i.e. the prediction of readership based upon the manipulation of "stimulus" variables, such as type of content. The

significant trend away from heterogeneous content (i.e. miscellaneous topics) towards the use of more categorically homogeneous topics, indicates a controlled selectivity relative to feature content topics. Such deliberation also intimates a greater premium on message efficiency.

2. As a corollary effort to heighten readership, the editors of Soldiers have also decided to use more but shorter feature articles. This is shown by an increase in the average number of feature articles per issue (+27%) and a decline in average article length (-27%). Brevity is also a significant stimulus variable predictor of readership (Swanson, 1955; Root, 1966; Griese, Note 5).

3. Another conclusion is that the feature content trends found in Soldiers are influenced by key events and changes in the internal/external environment. During the early seventies when sociopolitical controversy was high, levels in controversial issue content were also at their highest. Further, during the three-year period when the Army underwent its major organizational change from a draft to a volunteer source of manpower, levels in policy content were, correspondingly, at their aggregate highest. The same type of general correlation applies to history content, and hobbies and recreation content, as well.

4. The increase in the number of pages devoted to departmental content, from an average of seven pages during

1971-72, to a present level of 12 pages, appears to be a decision to stabilize and balance the overall format of Soldiers at a new equilibrium between information and entertainment content. Nearly one out of five pages is now departmental in nature, compared to an initial ratio of only one out of 10 pages. Furthermore, the institutionalization of routine levels of policy, personal affairs, and personality content (traditionally solid reader attractions) into departmental sections (accounting for nearly all of the departmental increase) adds a potent readership dimension to the departmental section.

5. The increasing trend in hobbies and recreation content indicates an editorial thrust towards more personalized, human interest type topics. Further, this decision appears to be in support of a major goal of Army management: to attract and retain quality people with a message that Army life is interesting, exciting, and offers a quality parallel to civilian life.

6. The decreasing trends in levels of duty and training, and sports content, two traditionally dominant topics, is seen as a result of the reduction in total pages allocated to feature content, and is also due to increasing emphasis on more specific human interest topics, e.g. hobbies and recreation articles. This also appears to be the area of major content trade-offs.



7. Medical and research and development topics appear to be secondary topics of emphasis of the editors. They have a less consistent role and status in the overall magazine formula. This is demonstrated by the relatively aperiodic occurrence of these topics throughout the period studied.

8. The lack of statistically significant results in this study is attributed to one or more factors. First, the pervasive realignment of content priorities which emerged over the period studied was neither gradual nor systematic. Wide fluctuations in content categories occurred. While not discounting the possibility of coder inaccuracy, this factor appears to stem from editorial management as it reacted to changing conditions and priority objectives relative to internal and external events and changes. This would have a specifically adverse impact on the levels of correlation and degree of probability of scattergram analysis findings.

Secondly, the limited number of observations plotted (seven, one for each 12-month period), increased the vulnerability of scatterplotting to aperiodic fluctuations in content levels. The scattergrams for medical, and research and development content, graphically illustrate this point.

Janowitz (1976), in his discussion of trend analysis, emphasized its maximum utility in the study of long-term



trends. From the results of this study, it could be concluded that seven observations are not a sufficient number to produce significant results, despite the effort to oversample the population of this study.

Nonetheless, it is felt that the use of scatterplotting techniques is a valid method for the analysis of content, despite the less than significant results of this study. Furthermore, increased understanding and refinement of this method, relative to the analysis of communication content, would add a valuable, quantitative tool to the methodological inventory available to the content analyst.

#### Recommendations

A study focusing upon other stimulus variables, such as design elements, position, layout, and so on, would be a potentially fruitful area of further research regarding Soldiers, or any other employee magazine. Such a study could classify and measure display variables and analyze for correlations regarding editorial emphasis and reader interest. There are rich and varied literature sources that could be used in support of the conceptualization of such a study.

Another area of research that would contribute to the pragmatic understanding of the role and effect of content in employee magazines would be an inquiry into the optimum photo/illustration-to-body-text ratio which would lead to

the desired level of communication efficiency between editor and reader. Photos and illustrations are strong visual and affective variables. But how far should editors go in their use before substantive communication is diminished? To attract the reader is only half the challenge. To entice him to read a desired message, from the editor's perspective, remains a complex, intriguing problem.

Finally, there is a great need for comparative research in employee magazines. This study was inhibited by the lack of a universal, comprehensive system of content categorization. The benefit derived from the development of such a system would enhance the systematic study of the comparative content used by employee magazines in general, and would facilitate the application of findings, such as the ones of this study, to those recorded in the general literature.

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Appendix A

Correspondence from the Executive Editor  
of Soldiers Magazine



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
SOLDIERS  
CAMERON STATION  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

SFPA-SM

14 July 1978

Major Sam Wilson  
105 Oak Tree Square  
Athens, Georgia 30606

Dear Major Wilson:

This is in response to your recent telephone call to Lieutenant Colonel Witek, requesting our suggestions on a possible thesis topic which would be of benefit to SOLDIERS.

Although we discussed several possible research topics, it is our consensus that a content analysis of the magazine would be most valuable. You might wish to consider, for example, a comparison of type and photo column inches for various categories of articles over the last several years. You could look for trends in emphasis on type (category) of article, length of copy, space for photos, etc. Any trends which are determined could be related to readership studies.

Should you decide to pursue this topic, I suggest you get in touch with Captain Warren Lacy, our Associate Editor, and discuss it with him. You may reach him on AUTOVON 284-6671 or AC 202/274-6671. He could also provide you with selected issues of the magazine, per your sample, and copies of appropriate studies, etc.

Thank you for your interest in SOLDIERS. We look forward to being able to assist you.

Sincerely,

ROBERT J. FETTEROLF  
LTC, MPC  
Executive Editor

CF:  
CPT Lacy



Appendix B

Issues of Soldiers Magazine Selected in Random Sample

Issues of Soldiers Magazine Selected in Random Sample

The following issues of Soldiers Magazine were selected by random sample by year (i.e., June of one year to May of the next), beginning with the June 1971 issue, for analysis in this study.

a. Year One

June 1971  
August 1971  
October 1971  
January 1972  
February 1972  
March 1972

b. Year Two

June 1972  
July 1972  
September 1972  
November 1972  
January 1973  
March 1973

c. Year Three

July 1973  
September 1973  
October 1973  
December 1973  
January 1974  
March 1974

d. Year Four

June 1974  
August 1974  
November 1974  
December 1974  
February 1975  
March 1975

e. Year Five

June 1975  
July 1975  
August 1975  
December 1975  
March 1976  
May 1976

f. Year Six

June 1976  
August 1976  
February 1977  
March 1977  
April 1977  
May 1977

g. Year Seven

June 1977  
July 1977  
August 1977  
December 1977  
March 1978  
April 1978

Appendix C

Coding Key for Feature Content Analysis of Soldiers Magazine  
(Cross Tabulation)

Coding Key for Feature Content Analysis of Soldiers Magazine  
(Cross Tabulation)

<u>Card Column Number(s)</u>	<u>Variable Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Type of Data</u>	<u>Limits</u>	<u>Codes</u>
1-3	STORYNUMB	Serial number assigned to each successive article examined	Range	001-612	001=1st article examined 002=2nd article examined etc.
4-5	ISSUNUMB	Serial number assigned to each issue from June of one year to may of next	Discrete	01-12	01=June 02=July etc.
6	ISSUYEAR	Serial number assigned to each year in which issue appeared	Range	1-7	1=1971-1972 2=1972-1973 etc.
7-8	STORYCON	Content of article according to scheme used by editors of <u>Soldiers</u>	Discrete	01-11	01=Controversial issue 02=Personal affairs etc.



Appendix D

Coding Key - Soldiers Magazine Feature Content Analysis  
(Scatter Plotting)

Coding Key - Soldiers Magazine Feature Content Analysis  
(Scatter Plotting)

<u>Card Column Number(s)</u>	<u>Variable Name</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	ISSUYEAR	Number from 1 to 7 indicating year of content (1=1971-72; 2=1973-74, etc.)
2-5	CONTISSU	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with contro- versial issues
6-9	PERSAFFA	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with personal affairs
10-13	RESNDEV	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with research and development
14-17	POLICY	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with research and development
18-21	HISTORY	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with history
22-25	PERSONAL	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with personality
26-29	SPORTS	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with sports

<u>Card Column Number(s)</u>	<u>Variable Name</u>	<u>Description</u>
30-33	HOBNREC	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with hobbies & recreation
34-37	DTYNTNG	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with duty & training
38-41	MEDICAL	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with medical
42-45	MISCELLA	Column percentage of articles per year dealing with miscellaneous topics